

Transforming Education in Rhode Island



The Race to the Top Opportunity

Race to the Top Implementation Update - March 3, 2011

The First Six Months: August 24, 2010 - February 28, 2011

Key Accomplishments in Implementing our Plan

☐ The First 90 Days: State and LEA Scopes of Work

- August 24 - November 22, 2010, was our “90-day planning period” with the U.S. Department of Education (USED) and with our Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Together, we developed and completed each LEA’s scope of work and a state scope of work, which are the plans that will guide our work over the four years of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant.
- Each LEA was assigned a Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff member as a “liaison” to guide them through the process of completing their scopes of work. RIDE held several webinars for LEAs to ask questions and held technical assistance meetings in each region of the state. The LEA and state scopes of work were submitted to USED on November 22, 2010.
- We are awaiting approval of our scopes of work from USED. RIDE has submitted revised timelines and performance measures, as requested by USED. RIDE must submit a complete individual budget from each LEA before receiving final approval.

☐ The LEA Budget Process

- During the month of February, RIDE held an in-person technical assistance session and three webinars for LEA business managers and superintendents to understand the LEA budget completion process and ask questions regarding their budgets.
- Completed LEA budgets were due to RIDE on March 1, 2011. RIDE is reviewing each LEA’s budget and will submit approved budgets to USED by March 15, 2011.

❑ Working with the U.S. Department of Education

- Over the past six months, RIDE has worked closely with our assigned RTTT program officer and others at USED to understand the requirements of the grant, move toward the approval of our scopes of work, submit amendments to our RTTT plan where needed, and report our progress on a monthly basis.
 - Changes to our RTTT plan, timeline, or budget must be approved by USED. To date, we have submitted three amendments requesting changes to our plan: 1) an amendment to several of the timelines included in our Race to the Top application; 2) an amendment requesting redirection of funding from the State Board Examination Consortium (SCOBES) project to the Multiple Pathways through Virtual Learning Project; and 3) an amendment redirecting funding to support state and local performance monitoring. We are in communication with our program officer about these amendments and are awaiting approval.

❑ Identifying Adaptive Challenges

- In the scopes of work, LEA leaders were asked to identify “adaptive challenges” that they anticipated in implementing Race to the Top – complex challenges and shifts from the current way of doing things that would need to be addressed in order to successfully carry out the initiatives in RTTT.
- RIDE has completed an initial analysis of those adaptive challenges. Part of our work in the coming months will be to conduct a deeper gap analysis with each LEA. We’ll use the scopes of work as a starting point to determine where each LEA is starting out and what steps will be necessary to ensure that we meet the student achievement goals set out in our RTTT plan.

❑ Developing a Performance Monitoring Plan

- As part of our performance monitoring process, we plan to organize LEAs into collaborative learning groups focused on outcomes, where they can formally share with one another what’s working and where they’re struggling, addressing challenges together as they arise. In February, RIDE convened a focus group of LEA representatives to solicit feedback on that proposed plan. Overall, the focus group participants responded favorably to the opportunity to formally share best practices and work through challenges across LEAs.
- RIDE is working with USED to understand new guidance on the requirements for our performance monitoring plan. The due date for this plan is April 29, 2011.

☐ Year One Projects: Educator Evaluation and Study of the Standards

▪ Educator Evaluation:

- For several months, over 100 educators have worked with RIDE on developing the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System. We also have had the help of a technical advisory committee of experts.
- RIDE and the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals are working to combine the evaluation systems we each have been developing into one model.
- In early February, the first full draft of the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System was posted to the RIDE website and released to a variety of stakeholders. RIDE is now meeting with small groups of educators to engage in deep conversations around the working draft that we distributed.
- We are field-testing the evaluation system in three LEAs – two traditional districts and one charter public school. Field-testing will continue through March.

▪ Study of the Standards:

- Intermediary service providers have been prepared, over the course of three days of training by the Dana Center, to deliver the Study of the Standards training to educators. RIDE has developed the training protocols, tools, and processes for the Study of the Standards. RIDE continues to complete the LEA schedule for Study of the Standards training to occur this year.

☐ Recruitment

- At this time, RIDE has filled 10 of the 20 positions supported by RTTT. We continue to plan for and recruit the other 10 positions.

☐ Requests for Proposals

- RIDE has convened focus groups of LEA representatives and stakeholders to gather input on the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) being developed for RTTT projects.
- UPD Consulting is leading us through the process of developing these RFPs, and with LEA input on what is needed within each of the services we are seeking, the RFPs will attract qualified vendors with services that match our needs.
- RFPs will be released throughout the months of March and April.